



Strong Women, Strong Girls Prospectus

Description:

Strong Women, Strong Girls fosters high aspirations among low income, minority elementary school girls and helps them develop skills for life-long success. College women, who are trained and engaged as mentors, lead girls in an innovative after-school program model that includes the study of contemporary and historical female role models, research-based learning activities, community service projects and horizon-broadening field trips to colleges and other sites. By building communities of women who are committed to supporting the success and achievement of the next generation, Strong Women, Strong Girls is expanding opportunities for low income girls in Greater Boston and beyond.

Location: Boston, MA

Website: www.swsg.org

Founded: 2004

Current Budget: \$243,120

Geography & People Served:

Low income and minority girls in grades 3-5 in Boston and Cambridge.

Social Problem:

- The percentage of girls who report being “happy just as I am” drops from 60% in elementary school to 29% in high school.
- Girls in Boston’s public high schools are more likely than boys to report experiencing stress from homework and grades (48% versus 33%).
- 40% of girls in Boston report feeling sad or hopeless almost every day for at least two weeks in a row compared with 25% of boys.
- Only 17 after school programs in Massachusetts are designed specifically for girls, of which 11 are in the Greater Boston area. Of these, only three serve elementary school girls; the rest serve older girls.

Key Accomplishments & Social Impact:

- Currently serving 250 girls annually at 20 elementary schools and community center partner sites in Boston and Cambridge. Engaging 70 trained women volunteer mentors from four college chapters: Harvard University, Simmons College, Northeastern University, and Boston College.
- 94% of parents report that their daughters learn new skills through SWSG, and 88% report an increase in their daughters’ self-esteem.
- 93% of the mentors believe that their participation in SWSG will help them in their future goals as leaders and as lifelong advocates for women/girls.
- Featured in *Seventeen Magazine* and *Glamour Magazine*. Founder Lindsay Hyde was named 2007 Bank of America “Local Hero.”
- Piloted an expansion to Pittsburgh that is currently serving 150 girls at 12 partner sites, engaging 40 college women from three college chapters.

Goals – Eighteen Months (June 2007 – Dec 2008):

- Serve 300 girls annually in 20 after school sites.
- Train 80 volunteer women mentors from four college chapters
- Implement training for all school/community site facilitators
- Implement a parent and teacher outreach program
- Develop customized partnership plans for each school/community site

Total Philanthropic Investment – 18 Months: \$429,500



Contact Information:

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Ways to Invest

In-Kind Support

- Office space
- 2-3 Board members from the business community
- Guest speakers and field trip opportunities
- Event space
- Public relations services
- Contact management system
- Upgraded technology (software and hardware)
- Printing/copying services

Financial Support

- \$50,000** Staff to develop infrastructure in programming and operations
- \$25,000** Develop parent and teacher outreach program model
- \$15,000** Service-Learning Curriculum & City-Wide Showcase
- \$10,000** Sponsor a SWSG Group for a year
- \$5,000** Sponsor a Mentor Training Day
- \$1,000** Sponsor a SWSG Girl for a year



a Root Cause social enterprise



Need & Opportunity

When you educate a girl, you educate a nation. – Nelson Mandela

Social Problem

There are currently over 6,000 girls in grades 3 through 5 in the Cambridge and Boston public schools of whom 87% are minorities, 72% are low income and 39% speak a first language other than English. This diverse group of girls is one of Greater Boston's best assets. Unfortunately, too many struggle to navigate the path to adulthood, facing a variety of challenges during adolescence:

- **Decline in self-esteem and academic confidence.** Girls nationwide suffer from a significant decline in self-esteem as they move from childhood to early adolescence. In a study conducted by the American Association of University Women, girls who reported being "happy just as I am" dropped from 60% in elementary school to 29% in high school¹
- **School stress.** According to a 2003 study by the Boston Center for Youth and Families, girls in Boston's public high schools are more likely than boys to report stress from homework and grades (48% versus 33%)²
- **Conflict with peers.** The same study found that girls are more likely than boys to report stress from conflicts with friends (35% versus 23%)³
- **Risk for depression.** 40% of girls in Boston feel sad or hopeless almost every day for at least two weeks in a row compared with 25% of boys⁴
- **Eating/body image issues:** 47% of girls in 5th to 12th grade report wanting to lose weight because of magazine pictures⁵

United Nation's research shows that the key to women's development lies in the extent to which girls are educated, nurtured and empowered, as expressed in Nelson Mandela's quote above. Failing to address the needs of Greater Boston's girls has significant social and economic implications for the entire community. Key indicators of the current status of women suggest that income and economic disparities persist, despite recent advances:

- On average, unemployment rates for young African American and Latina women are higher than for white females or males of all ethnic/racial backgrounds.⁶
- Over 20% of women in Boston are living in poverty. Over 60% of poor families with children under 18 years old are headed by single females, the highest percentage in the state.⁷
- The necessary income to support a family with two children in Boston is over \$55,000. This is well above the average woman's earnings of \$33,000.⁸

Today's girls are tomorrow's women. Without support, girls are at greater risk for not achieving their goals and fulfilling their potential as they become adults.

Root Cause Factors

The American Association of University Women reports that early adolescence is a significant transition period for both sexes, but research reveals it to be a particularly difficult time for girls. Moving from "young girl" to "young woman" involves meeting unique demands in a culture that both idealizes and exploits the sexuality of young women, while assigning them roles that are clearly less valued than male roles. At no other time in a woman's life is her developing sense of self influenced so much by popular culture, peer relationships, and the need for belonging. Poor self-esteem and body image, depression, and other psychological difficulties may emerge during this turbulent time. The path to adolescence can be particularly tenuous for girls from low income communities. Poverty, and the related violence and negative social pressures, can exacerbate the challenges girls face and impose formidable barriers to future success.

¹ Gilligan, C. (1991). *Shortchanging Girls, Shortchanging America: Executive Summary. The American Association of University Women.* Washington, DC.

² The Boston 2003 Trend Report: Snapshot of Boston's Children and Youth. (2003). *Boston Center for Youth and Families*, Boston, MA

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ "Helping Girls Succeed: A Progress Report. Today's Girls Tomorrow's Leaders". United Way of Massachusetts Bay. Boston, MA

⁶ Weiler, J. Career Development for African American and Latina Females. ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education. Available: www.parentsassociation.com

⁷ US Census data as cited by the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women.

⁸ "Real Cuts, Real Pain, Real People", (2005) Massachusetts Commission of the Status of Women.



Gender stereotypes on the part of students, teachers, counselors, parents, and relatives continue to undermine girls' academic confidence and confine them into a limited set of career capabilities and options. Girls are much more likely than boys to say they are "not smart enough" or "not good enough" to pursue their dream careers.⁹ As a result, when girls become adult women, they tend to cluster in only 20 out of 400 occupational categories, many of which have limited earnings potential.¹⁰ The choices of low income girls are often narrowed further because they generally have few opportunities to explore alternatives outside their immediate communities. Research has shown that the occupational status and educational level of a girl's parents, in particular her mother, have a significant impact on her career aspirations and career choices.¹¹ Daughters of mothers who are experiencing economic hardship show lower reduced occupational aspirations and expectations, and limited knowledge of various occupations and career paths.

Current Landscape

Psychologist Dr. Sylvia Rimm, author of "See Jane Win," suggests that helping girls to acquire skills that help to bolster self-esteem enables them to build the internal assets necessary to be strong and successful. The same holds true for career expectations; it is critical for girls to be exposed to alternative careers and role models before gender socialization and stereotyping become a strong influence on their career choices.¹²

According to the Girls' Coalition of Greater Boston¹³ girls are best served in gender-sensitive programs – programs that pay explicit attention to gender as well as to race, culture and other aspects of girls' lives. Research by the Three Guineas Fund concludes that there are several "best practices" for single sex programs.¹⁴ These include:

- Programming that caters to the specific needs of the girls served
- A holistic approach that considers the needs of the "whole" girl
- Collaborations that build a full spectrum of services
- Strong personal relationships between staff (preferably young women in their 20s and 30s) and girls
- Quality of program versus quantity served
- Providing a girls-only space where girls can be both physically and emotionally safe.

Currently, girls in the Boston area are woefully underserved. Despite the increased emphasis on gender by some local foundations, public and private interest in and funding for girl-specific programming has generally diminished over the last five years. Only 17 programs in Massachusetts are designed specifically for girls, of which 11 are in the Greater Boston area. Of these, only three serve elementary school girls; the remainder serve older girls.¹⁵

Social Innovation in Action: The Strong Women, Strong Girls Model

Strong Women, Strong Girls (SWSG) has created an innovative after school model (illustrated in the graphic on the next page) that engages college women to support the healthy development of low income girls, fostering high aspirations and skills for lifelong success.

Strong Women, Strong Girls programming is offered to girls in grades 3-5 during after school hours at partner elementary school and community center sites. Girls participate in Strong Women, Strong Girls once a week for 1.5 hours. The program operates for the nine months of the school year. In Strong Women, Strong Girls, girls work in groups of 10-12 peers with a team of two to three college women who serve as volunteer mentors.

The Strong Women, Strong Girls program is content-driven. Each week, the girls and their mentors work through one of the Strong Women, Strong Girls curriculum activities. In each activity, they girls read a biography of a contemporary or historic female role model, participate in a project-based learning activity, and conclude with

⁹ American Society of University Women, *Shortchanging Girls, Shortchanging America*, 1994

¹⁰ LeBrenton, L. & Loevy, S. (1992). *Breaking New Ground: Worksite 2000*. Chicago: Chicago Women in Trades.

¹¹ Domenico, D. M. and Jones, K. H. (2006). "Career Aspirations of Women in the 20th Century", *Journal of Career and Technical Education*.

¹² Progress and Promise, WEAA Equity Resource Center at EDC (September 2002)

¹³ Wheeler, K, Olivieri, R, Towery, ID and Mead, M. (2005) *Where are the Girls? The State of Girls Programming in Greater Boston*, Girls Coalition of Greater Boston.

¹⁴ "Improving Philanthropy for Girls' Programs, Strategies & Tools from Founders & Program Staff (2001). Three Guineas Fund

¹⁵ BostNET, Boston's After School Network

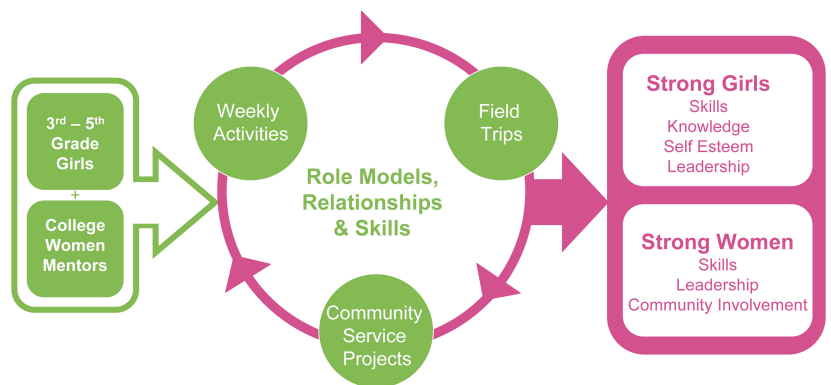


journal writing and reflection. During the final six weeks of the program, the girls and their mentors co-design a service project that makes a positive impact on the community.

Three core principles drive the Strong Women, Strong Girls program model: Relationships, Role Models, and Skills.

Relationships: Relationships are formed between the volunteer mentors and participating girls. The college women who volunteer as mentors represent a diverse array of racial, ethnic, geographic, and socio-economic backgrounds. As a result of these diverse experiences, the mentors are able to connect with the girls in a variety of ways. The diverse backgrounds of the mentors also introduce the girls to new cultures, new ideas, and a new understanding of the world. In addition to forming strong relationships with their mentors, the girls also form strong relationships with one another. By utilizing a group mentoring model and emphasizing activities that build teamwork skills, Strong Women, Strong Girls engages the girls in supporting one another, providing peer-to-peer mentorship, and encouraging the girls to continue to champion one another beyond their time in Strong Women, Strong Girls.

Role Models: Role models play a powerful role in helping girls to develop high aspirations. Strong Women, Strong Girls provides role models for the girls involved in two ways. First, the college women who volunteer as mentors serve as powerful role models. These volunteer mentors represent a diverse array of college majors, of extracurricular activities, and of career goals. By working with a team of college mentors, the girls have the opportunity to learn about a variety of pathways and career opportunities and to develop an understanding of the steps that are required to achieve those goals.



In addition to learning about their mentors, the girls in SWSG also learn about 10 highly diverse female role models who teach the girls about the accomplishments of women and support the girls in imagining their own potential. In the 2006-07 program year, the girls learned about women including African activist Wangari Maathai; the first female Prime Minister of Pakistan, Benazir Bhutto; Pixar producer Gayle Sussman; and surfer Bethany Hamilton.

Skills: Supporting girls in developing skills for future success is a critical component of Strong Women, Strong Girls. Over the course of the year, the girls learn about and practice 10 skills that research has suggested are essential for girls' lifelong success. These skills include critical thinking, communication, cultural sensitivity, and coping strategies.

In addition to supporting the development of the elementary school girls, Strong Women, Strong Girls also supports the growth and development of the college undergraduate women who serve as volunteer mentors. By engaging, training, and supporting this exceptional group of young women, Strong Women, Strong Girls is ensuring that they are exceptional mentors for their girls now and lifelong champions for women and girls.

Social Impact



In 2005, Strong Women, Strong Girls piloted an evaluation process designed to ensure that the organization is providing the highest quality programming to the girls involved in the program. Through the evaluation process, Strong Women, Strong Girls developed an initial series of tools designed to measure girls' skills, knowledge, self-esteem, and leadership. These tools were designed to be developmentally appropriate, and as a result, use pre- and post-test games, pictures, and matching activities to help assess the progress that each girl has made over the course of the year. In addition to collecting information from the girls involved, Strong Women, Strong Girls annually surveys the girls' parents to determine the outcomes that parents are seeing as a result of the program as well as the site liaisons at each partner elementary school and community center.

In 2006, Strong Women, Strong Girls recognized that it was also important to learn about the impact of the program on the college undergraduate women who served as volunteer mentors. The first on-line survey of mentors focused on several key areas: skills, leadership development, awareness of and commitment to social justice, and issues facing women, girls and the community.

The table, below, shows a sample of the evaluation data collected at the end of the 2005-06 program year.

Social Impact Indicators		Current Result
Girls		
<i>Skills</i>	• % of parents who believe that their daughter learned new skills	94%
<i>Knowledge</i>	• % of girls who say they know that there are many jobs they can have when they grow up	70%
<i>Self-Esteem</i>	• % of girls who believe that they can succeed in school	65%
	• % of parents who believe that their daughter's self-esteem increased	88%
<i>Leadership</i>	• % of parents who saw an increase in their daughter's belief that she is a leader	80%
College Mentors		
<i>Skills</i>	• Learned how to implement and lead curriculum	70%
	• Learned how to work with girls	60%
<i>Leadership</i>	• Increased self-confidence and feelings of empowerment	94%
	• Believe that their work with SWSG will help them achieve future goals	93%
<i>Community Involvement</i>	• Increased awareness of the needs of girls	75%
	• Increased awareness of social justice and community issues	60%

Strong Women, Strong Girls is continuously looking for ways to improve its program evaluation process. Most recently, Strong Women, Strong Girls was selected as one of only three organizations to participate in an evaluation cohort funded by Procter & Gamble. Working in collaboration with two other Boston-based programs serving at-risk youth, Strong Women, Strong Girls will be engaging with an external evaluator to assess the impact of the program, as well as to identify new strategies for measuring program impact. Additionally, Strong Women, Strong Girls is currently seeking support to develop the organizational and technological infrastructure necessary to track participating girls and mentors over time.

Organizational & Program Health Measures

Strong Women, Strong Girls tracks the data below to measure the organization's growth and development in the Greater Boston area. All of the schools that work with Strong Women, Strong Girls request that the program return year after year, and recommend the program to other schools and community centers. Currently, Strong Women, Strong Girls provides programming to 250 girls at 20 partner sites in Boston and Cambridge.

2005A	2006A	2007A	2008E	2009E
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Number of Girls	150	200	250	300	350
Number of College Mentors	40	65	70	80	105
Number of School/Community Center sites	10	15	20	20	25
Number of Higher Education Partners	2	3	4	4	4

Financial Sustainability

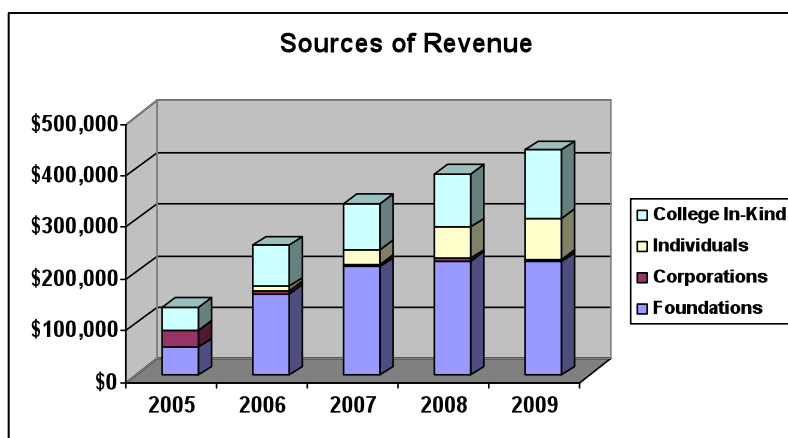
Strong Women, Strong Girls was founded by Lindsay Hyde as a student group of the Phillips Brooks House Association at Harvard University. In its first year, SWSG served girls at two sites with six volunteer mentors from Harvard. Since that time, requests from parents, teachers, and principals have driven the rapid growth of Strong Women, Strong Girls in the Greater Boston area. As a result of this rapid expansion, Strong Women, Strong Girls will focus its efforts in the next two years on building organizational infrastructure, increasing program depth, and ensuring program quality. To accomplish this, Strong Women, Strong Girls will hire additional staff to support the organization's operations and develop programming to engage parents and education partners. The table on the next page shows projected budget and staffing growth for the Boston program.

	2005A	2006A	2007E	2008E	2009E
Total Budget	\$87,250	\$171,487	\$243,120	\$286,320	\$304,320
College Chapter In-Kind	\$45,350	\$ 80,450	\$90,150	\$104,300	\$131,782
Total FTEs	1	2.5	3	4.5	5
Total Volunteer Hours	6,080	9,880	10,640	12,160	15,960

By forming strong partnerships with the organization's higher education partners and leveraging the time, energy, and talent of college women who volunteer as mentors, Strong Women, Strong Girls has created a strong and economical program model. Strong Women, Strong Girls leverages the in-kind services and funds from the college chapters, including the students' time (valued at \$5/hour), program supplies, and transportation. In-kind support from college chapters will exceed \$100,000 in 2008.

In addition to this substantial, in-kind support, Strong Women, Strong Girls engages funding from the Greater Boston community. Historically, Strong Women, Strong Girls has obtained most of the organization's funds from foundation supporters. To ensure the organization's long-term sustainability, Strong Women, Strong Girls is working

to diversify this funding base, with an emphasis on engaging individual donors. Strong Women, Strong Girls is also in the early stages of exploring options for earning revenue based on numerous requests for its curricula.



Leadership

Lindsay Hyde is the founder and Executive Director of Strong Women, Strong Girls. Lindsay graduated magna cum laude from Harvard University in 2004 with a joint degree in Sociology and the Studies of Women, Gender, and Sexuality, providing her with a strong academic foundation for her work with women and girls. During her time at Harvard, Lindsay also gained extensive experience working in the Greater Boston community through her involvement in the Phillips Brooks House Association, a student-led nonprofit organization based at Harvard University. In addition to serving as the Director of Strong Women, Strong Girls, Lindsay also served as the Co-Chair of the Phillips Brooks House Association Centennial Campaign, working to raise a \$7.5 million endowment



for the organization. Lindsay has served on the Board of Directors of the Campus Outreach Opportunities League, on the Harvard Faculty of Arts and Sciences Committee on Public Service, and on the Anne Radcliffe Trust at Harvard College.

Lindsay's leadership of Strong Women, Strong Girls has been recognized in *Glamour Magazine* and *Seventeen Magazine*. She has been honored with a Do Something BRICK Award for Social Entrepreneurship and most recently was named a 2007 "Local Hero" by Bank of America.

The 15-member Board of Directors of Strong Women, Strong Girls has provided invaluable guidance and support as the organization has grown. The diverse Board brings to the organization experience in publishing, education, girls' programming, marketing, campus student life, child development, law and accounting.

Key Funders

Strong Women, Strong Girls has received funding from a variety of sources, demonstrating support for the organization's approach and results to date, including:

- Amelia Peabody Foundation
- Anna B. Stearns Foundation
- Blue Cross, Blue Shield "Jump Up and Go!"
- Clipper Ship Foundation
- Linde Family Foundation
- Mabel Louise Riley Foundation
- Mass Service Alliance Mentoring Initiative
- United Way of Massachusetts Bay, Today's Girls... Tomorrow's Leaders